

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 07697 300915Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 PM-05 ACDA-12 MCE-00 TRSE-00
/054 W
-----016039 310432Z /62
R 300822Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3185

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MPOL KS
SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS REPORTS OF PLANNED DOMESTIC JET FIGHTER PRO-
DUCTION

1. SUMMARY: ROKG ANNOUNCES STEP-UP IN SCHEDULE FOR DOMESTIC
PRODUCTION OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY REPORTED 8/27 AND 8/28
THAT THE ROKG PLANS TO BEGIN PRODUCTION OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED
FIGHTER AIRCRAFT THIS YEAR. ORIGINAL PLANS CALLED FOR SUCH
PRODUCTION TO BEGIN IN EARLY 1980'S. THE DECISION WAS REACHED
AT THE THIRD DEFENSE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE CHAIRED
BY PRESIDENT PARK AT THE BLUE HOUSE 8/26. ALTHOUGH THE TYPE
OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT PLANNED FOR PRODUCTION WAS NOT ANNOUNCED,
AUTHORITIES CONCERNED SAID THE AIRCRAFT WOULD BE NEW SUPERIOR
TYPES OF HIGH SOPHISTICATION. ONE SOURCE SAID THAT, UNDER THE
PLAN, PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE
OF THE AIRCRAFT AND FOR THE PRODUCTION OF "KOREANIZED" ENGINES
WILL BE COMPLETED BY THE BEGINNING OF 1980. THE REPORTS
MENTIONED THAT KOREA BEGAN DOMESTIC PRODUCTION OF THE
500 MD HELICOPTER IN 1977 AND THE M48A3 AND M48A5 TANKS
THIS YEAR, AND THAT KOREA HAS THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE
EVEN ULTRAMODERN AIRCRAFT.

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3. ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT SO FAR HAS BEEN IN THE SHINA
ILBO, THE HANKOOK ILBO, AND THE HANKOOK ILBO'S ENGLISH-
LANGUAGE KOREA TIMES, WHICH PRAISED THE DECISION AND
DESCRIBED AS SIGNIFICANT THE FACT THAT KOREAN SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY HAD DEVELOPED TO A LEVEL CAPABLE OF
SUPPORTING SUCH DOMESTIC PRODUCTION.

4. COMMENT: ROK INTENTIONS TO "PRODUCE AIRCRAFT"
SHOULD BE READ IN TERMS OF THEIR "PRODUCTION" OF M48A3
AND A5 TANKS. LATTER PRODUCTION IS IN FACT
AN UPGRADE PROGRAM FOR THE M48 AND AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION
WILL PROBABLY BE OF THE SAME MAGNITUDE. SEE SEPTTEL FOR
RELATED DEVELOPMENTS AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS.
GLEYSTEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRODUCTION, FIGHTER AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SEOUL07697
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780355-0392
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978088/aaaaaggk.tel
Line Count: 70
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1783406
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN PRESS REPORTS OF PLANNED DOMESTIC JET FIGHTER PRO- DDUCTION
TAGS: MPOL, KS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d8c2ea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014